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KEVIN / JANUARY 4, 2014

6 Effective Approaches to Evangelism



When a Christian hears the words “personal evangelism”, there are typically three responses: fear (which shouldn't be the case), indifference, or excitement.

Many who respond with fear often compare themselves to gifted evangelists who have a commanding knowledge of the Scriptures and the naturally ability to enter into life-changing spiritual conversations and think, “I can't do that!!!”

I thank God for gifted evangelists and also realize that most of us are not like that.

About Me



Servant of the Word.
Husband. Blogger. Corazón Latino. Serving with Leadership Resources training pastors to preach God's Word with God's heart. I write at Unlocking the Bible, The Gospel Coalition, and For the Church. *Soli Deo Gloria*



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Christ. In *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, Bill Hybels and Mark Mittleberg share six different approaches to evangelism that will expand your view of evangelism and help you find the right style to fit your personality.

Below is a short summary of each of the six evangelism styles from the book. You may fall into more than one category—and that is great! The most helpful thing about these evangelism styles is learning more about yourself, so you know how God uniquely made you to reach out to others.

While some may be more gifted at verbally proclaiming the gospel to others, it is something we all are called to do. [Romans 10:17](#)  says, “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” We all need to be verbal proclaimers in addition to reaching out in other ways like the options below.

Even if you don’t fall perfectly into one or several of these approaches, my hope is that you will see the variety of opportunities that are all around you for sharing the gospel.

May God use these styles to show you how you can best reach the lost for His glory!

1. Direct Approach

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(Confrontational)

This is the Apostle Peter's approach in Acts 2, boldly proclaiming the Gospel to whoever would hear.

Evangelists who use the direct approach are often equipped with Gospel tracts and ask questions like, "If you were to die tonight, are you 100% sure that you would go to heaven?"

Direct evangelists get straight to the point, preach Christ, and seek a response. Chuck Colson, Billy Graham, Mark Cahill, and Ray Comfort have modeled and born much fruit with this approach.

2. Intellectual Approach

The intellectual approach to evangelism is what Paul modeled in Acts 17 when he reasoned with philosophers and the deep thinkers of Athens and is today practiced by apologists and other logical thinkers.

If you are a person who likes ideas, evidence, logical thinking, and Christian Apologetics, you might be an intellectual evangelist.

miserable than the Christian who for a time hedges in his obedience."

—D.A. Carson

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3. Testimonial Approach

Personal stories of transformation carry a unique weight and often do things that facts alone cannot do.

Evangelists who thrive with the testimonial approach tell powerful stories of Christ's saving work in their lives.

This is clearly seen in the blind man of John 9 who was healed by Jesus and then testified about Christ, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see!"

In [John 9:3](#), Jesus explains that the entire reason this man was born blind was "that the works of God might be displayed in him." That means that God custom-made this man specifically for this evangelistic approach!

Examples of those who use the testimonial approach are Dave Dravecky, Joni Erickson Tada, and [Lee Strobel](#).

4. Interpersonal Approach

Not everybody is drawn to knowing apologetics or sharing their Christian testimony. For those who have the natural ability to relate to people and love being with others, the interpersonal approach to evangelism is a natural way to



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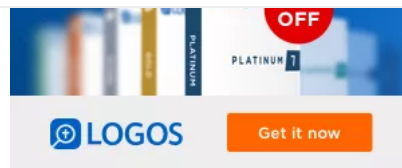
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interpersonal approach when you are able to share your faith with others out of a growing friendship.



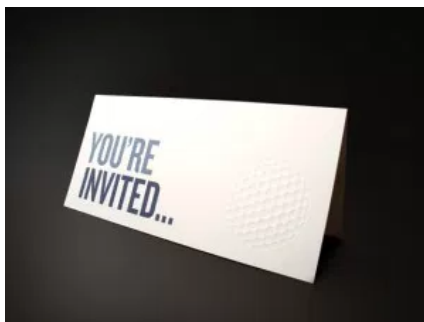
Matthew in [Luke 5:27-29](#)  serves as the perfect example:

“ After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, “Follow me.” And leaving everything, he rose and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them.

This style of evangelism is often labeled “Friendship evangelism.”

5. Invitational Approach

The invitational approach is similar to the interpersonal approach, but as its name suggests, thrives on inviting people to events like a church service, a retreat, or a Bible study. This is one of the most natural ways newer believers



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The Samaritan woman Jesus met at the well in John 4. After Jesus struck a conversation with her and revealed he was the Messiah, this woman ran back to her town and said to the people “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” ([John 4:29](#) ).

6. Service Approach

If you naturally notice the needs of others and enjoy serving them, you might prefer the service approach to evangelism. People who prefer this approach often enjoy sharing the love of Christ through deed over word. People with the gift of hospitality often fall into this approach.



The biblical example of this approach is Tabitha (also known as Dorcas) in [Acts 9:36-42](#) . She is described as “full of good works and acts of charity,” who used her gift of making clothing for God’s glory. In this biblical episode, Tabitha died, causing much grief among the widows who knew her. Her ministry touched many widows as we can see in verse 39, “All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made

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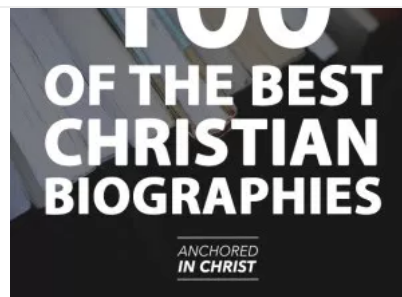
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Sharing these six approaches should not cause people to force themselves into the one approach that seems to fit them the best, but should help us realize the great diversity of ways God can use our strengths and personalities to reach others with the message of the Gospel.



I pray that it was an encouragement to you and you feel energized and ready to share the good news with others in the unique way God has gifted you!

What approach/approaches fit your personality? Share in a comment!

—

Recommended books on evangelism: [Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God](#) by J.I. Packer, [The Way of the Master](#) by Ray Comfort, [One Thing You Can't Do in Heaven](#) by Mark Cahill, and [The Gospel and Personal Evangelism](#) by Mark Dever, [Tell the Truth](#) by Will Metzger

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Denise says

January 24, 2014 at 5:34 pm

Thanks for posting this. I like the recommended books you listed at the end and I agree...most of us are not gifted evangelists, but we are called to evangelize. I did however have to disagree on some of your points. Although my personality type would probably be most comfortable with the interpersonal & service approach, I think those are the ones that allude to the popular phrase, "Preach the gospel and when necessary use words," which I do not think is biblical. If we are trying to "show" Jesus through our works rather than speak about Him, I think most people will be drawn to us rather than drawn to the Savior. Merely being nice or serving others won't tell the story of salvation and His wondrous cross. I have struggled with friendship evangelism and felt that was the way to go for me (since I tend to want to avoid conflict & am pretty quiet). But I think this video helped me see why it's not the best way to approach evangelism:

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Sorry

This video does not exist.

I may have misunderstood some of what you wrote on here, but I just thought I'd share that with you. Thanks again! 😊



KevinHalloran says

January 24, 2014 at 6:33 pm

You're absolutely right, thanks for commenting and clearing the air. I will have to add that in there somewhere.

If "just being nice" without verbal proclamation was an evangelism tactic, then what would separate us from the nice Mormons or Muslims down the block?

Faith comes by hearing...and hearing by the word of Christ. May we all be bold in our proclamation of the Gospel!

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[...] 3. Create a photo booth to introduce both the ministry and visual communication in your congregation.

Ideas about how you might branch out to include other artists or evangelize to an artistic community can be found here. [...]

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training pastors to preach God's Word with God's heart. I blog for the glory of God, to nourish the church, and to clarify my mind.

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